

Country of the Week: Central African Republic

The Central African Republic has a unique history that dates back thousands of years, and its distinct past continues to influence present day. Central Africans are linguistically diverse, and their traditional heritage compliments modern advancement. This fusion can be observed in the nation's remarkable song and dance style, which features contemporary sounds, as well as elements of ancient ceremonies and folk stories.

While the Central African Republic's historical and cultural identity are deeply intertwined into daily life, its people are also focused on shaping a promising future. The country's wonderful YALI Network members are part of that.

As members of the [Young African Leaders Initiative \(YALI\) Network](#), you are also part of this positive force driving the Central African Republic towards success. Because of your focus and dedication, the Central African Republic is the YALI Network #CountryoftheWeek!

Keep reading for three inspiring stories that feature the rights of women and girls, civic leadership, and entrepreneurial advancement.


Supporting the rights of women and girls

Adolphe Jocelyn Dambafa takes a multifaceted approach to supporting the rights of women and girls in the Central African Republic. Hosting many [#YALILearns events](#), he presents on common challenges, such as systemic violence towards women and limited access to education for girls.

Following his presentations, Adolphe encourages healthy discussions among attendees, often fostering productive dialogue between women and men. "The exchanges were so enriching during the debates," he recalls. With media and press often in attendance, his message and efforts are even more amplified, and he hopes to help positively influence public perceptions across the nation.

If you're interested in getting involved in your community, like the [YALI Network Facebook page](#), and access free online trainings, virtual events, and more by visiting the [YALI Network website](#).

Focusing on civic leadership

Cedric credits the YALI Network as an invaluable asset, saying "It allows me to learn everyday,  to hone my leadership skills, to get certificates, and most importantly to give back to my community by hosting events." He has completed more than ten [YALI Network Online Courses](#) that assist in his efforts, and he is often invited to address local youth associations.

Cedric participated in a [#YALILearns event](#), CAR4Her, to support an awareness campaign that defends young girls living in rural areas. Welcoming 100 participants, attendees discussed access to education, gender-based violence, female entrepreneurship, and leadership. The event garnered great success, and Cedric says that "Thanks to this event, we raised awareness on gender issues in


that rural area! At the end of the event, each participant pledged to stand for women's rights!"

In addition to women's rights, Cedric also focuses on civic leadership, building grassroots efforts around peacebuilding and human rights. "I use art therapy to help vulnerable children, and [I use] my medical and leadership skills to train, cure, sensitize, and build capacity among young people in my community."

Join Cedric and members like him by joining the [YALI Network](#). You'll receive email updates, opportunities to collaborate with other young leaders, and access to helpful products and programs such as [YALI Network Online Courses](#) and [#YALILearns events!](#)

Entrepreneurial advancement

Since joining the YALI Network, Marius Gnalis-Rafai has completed almost every [YALI Network Online Course](#), in addition to organizing several [#YALILearns events](#).

Marius helped organize two major events, including the #YALICoffeeTalk and #YALITransformation. The events hosted "more than 250 young people," many of whom "started small businesses." Marius owns a consulting business called [Be-Africa Innovation Lab](#) that supports young entrepreneurs through formal training and financial management guidance. 

In 2017, Marius initiated and implemented an event called "This Is CAR" with the support of the YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa. The event hosted 62 participants for a "transformational leadership training." Within one month of the event launch, "up to 30 percent of participants ... [became] ... YALI Network members." In addition, many attendees were inspired to conduct community service projects at their local primary schools.

Marius also participated in the #CAR4Her event with Dr. Cedric, and he reiterated its success saying that the event inspired "outreach activities in remote areas, bringing YALI ... outside of the capital city Bangui" for the first time.
